

# Human Relations Commission

## Annual Report - 2005



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[www.riversideca.gov/hrc](http://www.riversideca.gov/hrc)

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**The Human Relations Commission  
Mission Statement:**

*Advocating for equal opportunity, justice, and access in the City of Riverside to services and opportunities...Fostering mutual understanding and respect between people; encouraging education and outreach; developing and promoting programs which work to eliminate prejudice and discrimination.*



# **Introduction**

This is the fourth edition of the Human Relations Commission's Annual Report. The purpose of this report is to present to the public an insight as to the work of the commission in advocating for equal opportunity, justice, and access to services and opportunities in the City of Riverside.

The Human Relations Commission is charged with fostering mutual understanding and respect between people; encouraging education and outreach; developing and promoting programs which work to eliminate prejudice and discrimination.

The report is divided into sections starting with this introduction. We have included the Chairperson's message followed by a section that introduces our Commissioners, includes event photographs from some of our events and programs during 2004/2005, describes our organizational partnerships, and answers some frequently asked questions. At the end of the document you will find a breakdown of the fiscal budget.

We hope you find this report useful and enjoyable to read. If you have any questions about this report, feel free to call our office staff at (951) 826-5709, (951) 826- 5302, or (951) 826-5427. You can also e-mail us at [hrc@riversideca.gov](mailto:hrc@riversideca.gov) or visit our website at [www.riversideca.gov/hrc](http://www.riversideca.gov/hrc).

## Message from the Chairperson

The City of Riverside California is a diverse community with a population representing a wide diversity of racial, ethnic, and demographic groups. Recently the city's population became majority minority typical of the "central city" status our community holds in the broader Inland Empire Region.

This has been an eventful year in the life of the Commission reflecting an ongoing range of issues and concerns in the City of Riverside. The Commission seeks to:

- Identify areas of community concern
- Develop responses to meet those concerns.
- Monitor the trends and developments that affect the people and groups we are responsible to represent and support.
- Work with other public and private entities to insure fair and just treatment for all who find themselves in our city.

To increase our understanding of community issues the Commission has begun monthly Community Dialogues at our meetings. These presentations during the year have included presentations and/or hearings on immigration, poverty, the elderly, affordable housing for all groups, the homeless, the mentally ill, the hearing disadvantaged, youth, and the gay and lesbian communities.

The preparation of responses to the community concerns have included:

- Upgrading of Access Riverside, our complaint clearinghouse for issues of discrimination.
- Increased outreach efforts at community events and better coordination with community partners such as the Sherman Indian School, the California School for the Deaf, and the Eastside Youth Advisory Council.
- Development of forums on immigration issues.
- Liaison with other City departments: Police, Homeless Advisory Committee, etc.

Of particular interest has been the effort to create a more coordinated and integrated effort between the Human Relations Commission and the Community Police Review Commission. Through a staff realignment, the Office of Human Relations now provides staff support for both Commissions. In this fashion we are able to provide mutual support and increase the community outreach for the CPRC.

The continued growth and development of the City of Riverside creates new challenges on a daily basis. Each change portends different outcomes for different groups of people. Accessing the outcomes and assuring fairness and justice is the charge of the Human Relations Commission. We remain committed to that task.

Sincerely yours,

*AJ Wilson*

AJ Wilson, Chair



AJ Wilson,  
Chair



David St. Pierre,  
Vice Chair



Sherry Gordon  
Parliamentarian



Chani Beeman



John Brandriff



Rosemary Heru



Aric Isom



Claudia Johnson



Kelly Keenan



Haydee Llanes



Jan Moore



Luz Negron-Bermo



Sonya Walker



Gladys Walker



Marisa Valdez  
Yeager

# Program Highlights

## Race Equality Week

This is a National Program to observe a week of celebrating diversity, to promote initiatives that promote race equality, and to pledge continued efforts to promote race equality.

The National League of Cities' promotes Race Equality Week to raise awareness about racism and spotlight the efforts of cities working to reduce racial tensions and build bridges across racial boundaries. Cities across the country celebrate Race Equality Week in different ways. From diversity fests and community dialogues to library displays and multicultural concerts. Past participation for the City of Riverside included an essay contest, and a mural project, and multicultural concerts.

These events spotlight issues surrounding racism in America and what cities can do to promote diversity and strengthen ethnic relations. Issues like racial profiling, predatory lending, fairness in hiring practices, and affordable housing are among the issues that NLC focuses on. Many cities use this week to kick off new race initiatives and programs to promote race equality in their communities.

This year the Human Relations Commission purchased multicultural books for the City of Riverside's seven libraries.





## Riverside Police Department Liaison Program



Human Relations Commissioners were assigned to work with Precinct Lieutenants by attending community events and meetings. HRC Commissioners are a resource to assist efforts to address community relations concerns. Commissioners and Precinct Lieutenants work closely to develop strategies for addressing identified community relations issues. In addition, Commissioners participate in ride-alongs and community events with their RPD partners.

## Dialogue Programs

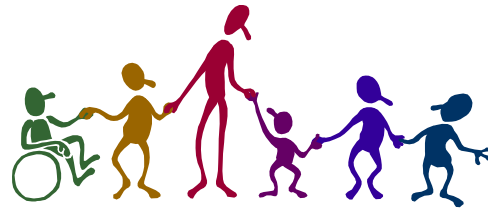
This year, the commission sponsored two Encompass productions, "Wheels" and "Horizon Line." Horizon Line looks at the seeds of prejudice, and watch bias-motivated behavior through the main character. The second production, Wheels, looks at who "belongs" in this country and who doesn't. Wheels explores topics such as immigration, xenophobia, and the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in the United States.





## Disability Roundtable Dialogue

In November 2005, the Commission heard from a panel of leaders from schools and community non-profits that serve the needs of people with disabilities. The dialogue grew from a discussion during a regular business meeting and provided Commissioners and the public the opportunity to learn about, and discuss, issues such as employment barriers which are particular to this community of Riverside residents.



## Access Riverside

Human Relations Commissions throughout the country have different ways in which they handle citizen's grievances or complaints. In general, commissions that serve a large city, county, or State have a complaint process that makes use of full time investigators on staff. Many of these also have a mediation option available through the local courts for the parties involved. Other smaller jurisdictions like the Human Relations Council of the Hemet and San Jacinto Region rely on a referral system for handling community complaints. These smaller councils lack the budget and resources necessary to conduct their own investigations. The Human Relations Commission of the City of Riverside is an example of this latter type.

In August 26, 2003, the City of Riverside made amendments to Sections 2.16.020 and 2.16.030 of City Ordinance #6704 entitled, "An Ordinance of the City of Riverside, California." This memo specifically addresses the Standing Rules of the Human Relations Commission of the City of Riverside, Section B, item #7: "To recommend and coordinate effective systems to insure equal justice and access for The City of Riverside." As such, Access Riverside was developed to address this mandate.

Access Riverside discrimination complaint forms are available on-line at [www.riversideca.gov/hrc](http://www.riversideca.gov/hrc), or at our offices at 3900 Main Street, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, Riverside, CA. 92522. You may also request a form by mail by calling (951) 826-5302.

Upon receiving your complaint form, our office staff will contact both parties to verify preliminary information. Our office will then make available to both parties the option of participating in a voluntary dispute resolution program provided by the Community Action Partnership of Riverside County. The program is basically a mediation process whereby conflict resolution is assisted by a neutral third party through active listening, understanding, exploration of options and compromise. For this reason we believe that participation in voluntary conflict mediation is a win-win alternative to small claims court.

Any information and discussion that takes place throughout this process is confidential in accordance to California Evidence Code Section 1152.5. The process also eliminates the need for time consuming and costly legal hearings and trials. Participation costs only \$10 for each participant.

Examples of disputes include:

- Landlord/Tenant
- Harassment
- Neighbor/Neighbor
- Small Claims
- Employer/Employee
- Consumer/Merchant
- Business/Business
- Adult Guardianship
- Victim/Offender Mediation
- Domestic (Divorce, Child visitation, Marital settlement agreements).



In the event that one or both parties wish not to take advantage of the low cost dispute resolution program, our office staff will refer

your case to State of California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH).

## 2004 Report Card

The City of Riverside Human Relations Commission is charged with the task of reporting annually on the state of inter-group relations and civil rights in the City of Riverside. The Commission has determined that an important element of the report needs to be the ongoing measurement of the actual economic, social, and political progress of minorities and other protected groups within the city. Benchmarks should be established to provide a basis for such measurement. While building trust and improving relations between groups remains a vital goal, the ultimate test is the actual progress towards equality of opportunity and outcome for all the community.



This year's Report Card highlighted several important trends in our community that calls for our attention. These include:

- The unequal ethnic student distribution between both school districts. There is a higher percentage of English Learner participants in Alvord Unified School Districts.
- Inability of disabled persons to gain employment as compared to state figures.
- High level of housing discrimination based on race.
- Unequal county loan denial rates based on race.
- Unequal representation of African Americans in traffic stops.
- Unequal distribution of pollution hazards in low-income and minority neighborhoods in our county.

## **Eastside Youth Advisory Council**

The mission of the Eastside Youth Advisory Council is "to create partnerships that will empower young people to excel through creating an environment that maximizes the potential of each youth becoming productive, tolerant, and active members of the Eastside community." EYAC envisions an inclusive Eastside community where all youth are successful empowered young people striving to achieve their full potential, realize dreams, improve communication & leadership skills, and looking to make a difference in their community.

The EYAC continues to promote our community and is also taking the lead in promoting the Eastside neighborhood by participating in efforts to improve the quality of life for all young people in the community. We advocate the Eastside to be a great place to live, learn, work, and play. The EYAC is the voice of the Eastside's youth. We are focused on issues and public policies that affect the growth and support of our young people by representing their interest with government.

### **2005 EYAC Activity:**

Continued partnership with Human Relations Commission  
Attended Eastside Neighborhood Forum meetings; congratulated by Councilmember Ameal Moore for support and vision in the Eastside neighborhood.

Partnered with the County of Riverside Council for Youth Development for advocacy at county level.

Partnered with the Riverside County Youth Advisory Council, First District- Supervisor Bob Buster for the youth led event "Be the Change", an informational fair for teens in areas of employment, education, and health services.

Hosted booth at Eastside Community Fair

Hosted booth at National Night Out

Helped paint the Eastside Alley Mural Project

Hosted several Youth Dialogs

Participated in Make A Difference Day

Hosted "Costa Rica" booth at Riverside 1st Annual Multi-Cultural Youth Festival; won "Best Booth".



## **Community Events**

### **Eastside Community Health Fair**

In collaboration with the Office of Neighborhoods and the Eastside Youth Advisory Council, the Human Relations Commission promoted Cesar Chavez Day during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Eastside Community Health Fair.



### **Black History Month Parade**

Commissioners supported the Annual Black History Month Parade through participation at the Expo. As in years past, Commissioners enjoyed taking part in the parade by riding on the fire trucks.



### **Open Mosque Day**

Commissioners, along with other City elected officials, visited the Islamic Academy as a part of regional Islamic event called Open Mosque Day. Mosques from across Southern California invited the community to feast and hear from local leaders and Islamic community members some of the important rituals, customs, and political issues unique to this religious community.





# Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee Multicultural Youth Festival How Big is Your World?

The Commission provided financial support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Festival held in Downtown Riverside.



## Juneteenth Celebration

Commissioners enjoyed a sunny day of music, food, and community connection as they handed out informational materials during the daylong festival and answered questions about the commission's work.





## Public Forums

In November 2004, the Human Relations Commission hosted a public forum on the issue of the Riverside Police Department's Traffic Stop Study Report. The report's author, Professor Gaines presented his report and discussed the data. The Riverside Police Department was present to offer their perspective and answer any questions.



## Monthly Community Group Discussions

In its efforts to continually improve its understanding of various groups within the city, the Human Relations Commission implemented a monthly discussion venue at its regular monthly meeting. In the past year the Commission heard from the following community groups:

- ❖ Sherman Indian High School Students
- ❖ District Attorney's Office Gang Suppression & Intervention
- ❖ Riverside Area Rape Crisis Center
- ❖ Riverside County Mental Health
- ❖ University of California Riverside – Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, & Transgender organization
- ❖ Riverside County Department of Veterans Service
- ❖ Casa Blanca Home of Neighborly Service
- ❖ Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Immigration Panel Discussion

## Other Community Events

- Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner
- NAACP Banquet
- Fair Housing Champions for Justice Banquet
- United Way Banquet
- Casa Blanca Cinco de Mayo Festival
- The American Association of University Women Conference
- National Night Out
- Fiesta de la Familia
- Neighborhood Conference  
"Cultural Diversity & Creating  
Inclusive Neighborhoods"



## Frequently Asked Questions

### *What is the Human Relations Commission?*

The Human Relations Commission (formally known as the Community Relations Commission), established in 1966 through the passage of Ordinance #3389, was created to ensure that all community members of the City of Riverside receive or participate in:

1. Equal justice before the law;
2. Equal socio-economic and political opportunities;
3. Protection of dignity and integrity of every individual;
4. Responsible citizenship;
5. Responsive redress of grievances;
6. Equitable opportunities in health, housing, education, and employment;
7. Respect and support of the law;
8. Education related to basic human rights and responsibilities;
9. Reduction and eventual elimination of prejudice among people based on race, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

### *What does the Commission do?*

The Human Relations Commission (HRC) creates access for Riverside community members to a complaint and referral system which can seek justice in cases where they perceive discrimination in

employment, use of public facilities, availability of housing, delivery of public services, and disparate treatment in the criminal justice system.

Our commission evaluates community progress in achieving equal opportunities for protected groups to achieve access to education services, employment and economic opportunities, health services, and access to public services.

Finally, the HRC enhances inter-group education, outreach, and interaction to build bridges between the diverse groups within our City, using tools such as Study Circles, Dinner Dialogues, and mediation training to conduct community events that facilitate the occasions for positive interaction.

### ***Who can serve on the Commission?***

Commissioners are registered voters who reside in the City of Riverside. They are appointed to the Commission by the City Council and serve staggered terms on a volunteer basis. The individuals may hold no paid office or employment with the City of Riverside. Those chosen come from diverse backgrounds which include education, medicine, health and welfare, law, real estate, business, finance, law enforcement, and labor. In addition, they also represent various ethnic and racial groups.

### ***How do you apply for the Commission?***

Individuals interested in serving on the commission should file an application with the City Clerk's Office year round. Each February Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and the City Council to fill vacancies.

### ***When and where does the Commission Meet?***

The Commission meets in various parts of the City, the third Thursday of each month.

## *How can the Commission serve those in Riverside?*

If you are in need of assistance, unsure where to go for action, or would like to appear before the Commission... all you need to do is call the Office of Human Relations at (951) 826-5709, (951) 826-5302, or (951) 826-5427. The address for correspondence with the Commission or Commissioners is:  
3900 Main St. 6th Floor Riverside, CA, 92522.



# Human Relations Commission Organizational Partnerships





## 2005/2006 Fiscal Budget

The Human Relations Commission is staffed by the Office of Human Relations which is housed in the City Manager's Office. A detailed Human Relations Commission and Community Sponsorship budget appears below.

Human Relations Commission	
Outreach and Education activities	
Supplies, printing, sponsorships, workshops	\$17,000.00
Staffing: .5 Executive Director, .5 Assistant Director	
1 Administrative Analyst	\$165,000.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$182,000.00</b>

### Office of Human Relations Staff

Pedro Payne, Ph.D., Executive Director

Jenna McAlmond, Sr. Administrative Analyst

Jen Gray-O'Connor, Administrative Analyst